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Something To Love

One reason we are currently seeing a return to the ways of the thirties and forties in films and literature is that many find so little to love in today's life, in today's America.

The present television generation--those under thirty generally speaking--often hate the system, as they say, hate the government, hate patriotism, the armed services, policemen, the courts, the traditional American way of life, traditional moral concepts and mores. And, of course, there is much wrong with all.

But Americans in the old days loved their country, and respected, in general, its government; the word duty was still a fine word (Robert E. Lee called it the sublimest word in the English language); law enforcement personnel were not abused wholesale, certain moral standards were accepted by most of us, the courts were, again generally speaking, respected and obeyed and good manners were in evidence in all parts of the country.

Economically, times were hard. But America had a soul, its citizens were not so violently ill-mannered, lawless and divided--even though there were discriminations and injustices. In short, we were more like certain northern European countries today, where law and order are taken for granted, there is little crime, and national unity and purpose are proud assets of the vast majority.

Today Americans badly need something to love, something to believe in, something to bring them together and heal the wounds administered by militants, revolutionaries, mixed-up professors, youngsters and certain minority leaders in the sixties. Already, thankfully, the tide has turned. And the longing to rediscover the atmosphere and lifestyle of the thirties and of the war forties is a sure and welcome sign the nation is coming back to its senses.

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HEART DISEASE TAKES 64% TOLL LOCALLY

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Among residents of Appomattox County, out of an average annual mortality of 100, some 64 are due to heart disease, the government's figures indicate. This is exclusive of deaths locally of non-residents.

Despite the heavy toll, definite progress is being made in some directions. For people under 65, for example, the heart rate has dropped 20 percent since 1950.

FARMERS BANK ELECTS DIRECTORS

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Extension Agent.

As of this date the number of shares of common stock outstanding and entitled to vote at the Annual Shareholder's Meeting was 18,500. Only those shareholders of record at the close of business on December 15, 1972, were entitled to vote.

Minutes count when heart attack strikes. Know the warning signs and act promptly. Call your doctor and carefully describe the symptoms. If a doctor isn't immediately available, get to a hospital emergency room at once. For a list of heart attack warning signs and other heart-saving information, ask your Heart Association.

The Paster Speaks

WE'VE NEVER DONE IT THAT WAY

A tradition may be a delightful link to the heritage of a church or it may be a cumbersome chain to hobble the steps of advance. It depends on how binding the tradition is. In the business [illegible] for example, some church members think, "We've never done it that way before" is all the reason needed to bury a new idea. It becomes a negative factor against anything new. When I hear that, I think of our grandfathers who drove the first new T-Model. I heard of one man who drove his T-Model home with pride and extreme caution and steered it between the doors of his new garage. The beaming family looked on and the man and the machine disappeared into the garage.

"Whoa!" demanded the driver, but the automobile did not obey. There was crashing timber and flying splinters, man and machine reappeared on the other side. It was a costly way to learn that the old way may not serve the new day.

A traditional worship service at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning does not necessarily doom a church that has good reason to assemble at another time. In Matthew 15, scribes and Pharisees confronted Jesus because his disciples did not go through the ceremonial washing before eating. They demanded, "Why do the disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" In answer, Jesus pointedly warned against letting tradition – even religious tradition – make void God's word. He added a stern rebuke about too much concern with outward form and ceremony and too little concern with the spiritual condition of the heart.

It is easy to get into a comfortable rut of tradition and so hard to get out when the need arises.

I wish our churches could display the initiative of the man who ran through the garage with his automobile. When he rebuilt the back wall of his garage he installed an extra set of doors. Then he just drove his car around in a circle until he made it "Whoa" where he wanted it. I wonder if anyone told him, "We've never done it that way before."

Richard C. Brackin, Pastor
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The Sunday School Lesson

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Durham, N. C. 27702

Comment on the International Sunday School lesson for February 25, 1973

Promise of a Better Day

Scripture: Zechariah 8: 13; 14:9

"They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, "The Lord is my God."

Zechariah 13:9

In times of hardship and difficulty people tend either to look backward to some golden age or a happier period in their lives or to look forward to some hoped-for better day. Some look in both directions. In war-ravaged Judah, to which the exiles returned to join with the poverty-stricken remnant which had been left there to rebuild the nation, some looked backward to the glorious reigns of David and Solomon, some to some future time of glory. Some prophets combined the two in foretelling the restoration of the kingdom of David under a descendant.

A visit to Jerusalem by a delegation from Bethel gave the prophet Zechariah the opportunity to proclaim a message of hope from God. As the work of restoring the Temple progressed, about 518 B.C., emissaries came from Bethel "to entreat the favor of the Lord" and to inquire of the priests if they should continue to observe the day of fasting which they had been in lamentation for the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar's army some 70 years before.

God answered the query through Zechariah, a portion of that answer providing part of the background Scripture for this week's International Sunday School lesson. In this answer God revealed that He is more concerned with man's observance of right ethical relationships with his fellows and in honest living than He is in ritual observances. In the future, the four days which had been observed with fasting to commemorate distressing events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem should be observed as "seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts," for God had in store for His people a better and more prosperous time.

In giving God's answer to the Bethel inquiry, Zechariah recalled God's anger against the people because they refused to obey His commandments and to treat each other as fellow children of God. Their refusal to obey God brought destruction and exile. As they had refused to listen to God, He did not hear them in the time of their extremity. "As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear," Zechariah quoted God. But in the better day to come, when "there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness," that old situation would not obtain, for those who had been cleansed and saved will call on the name of God, and He will answer them, they affirming "The Lord is my God," and God declaring them to be His people.

That better day will come in every life when the person says in sincerity that is the acknowledgment is implicit a thoroughgoing commitment to God, the identification of the individual's will with God's will, the acceptance of God's order as the way for life and living. In this commitment is implicit the acknowledgment that God is working out His purpose for His glory and humanity's true benefit. So the believer looks to the working out of God's purpose as the better day. In the confidence that God is at work in history to bring His purposes to realization, people can live triumphantly, regardless of the external circumstances.

In the achievement of God's purposes is man's best hope, and the truly abiding satisfaction comes through living in commitment to God. To live thus is to be a citizen in the kingdom of God. Zec... foresaw the day when ... kingdom would be ... realized, when "the Lo... become king over ... earth". As people increa... seek citizenship in tha... dom the coming of that ... hastened.

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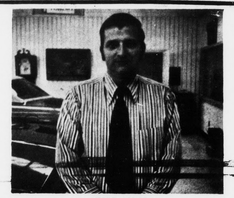

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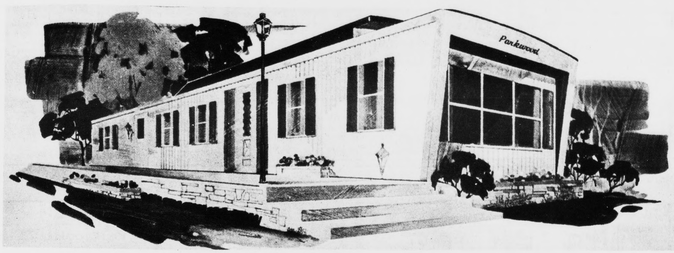

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